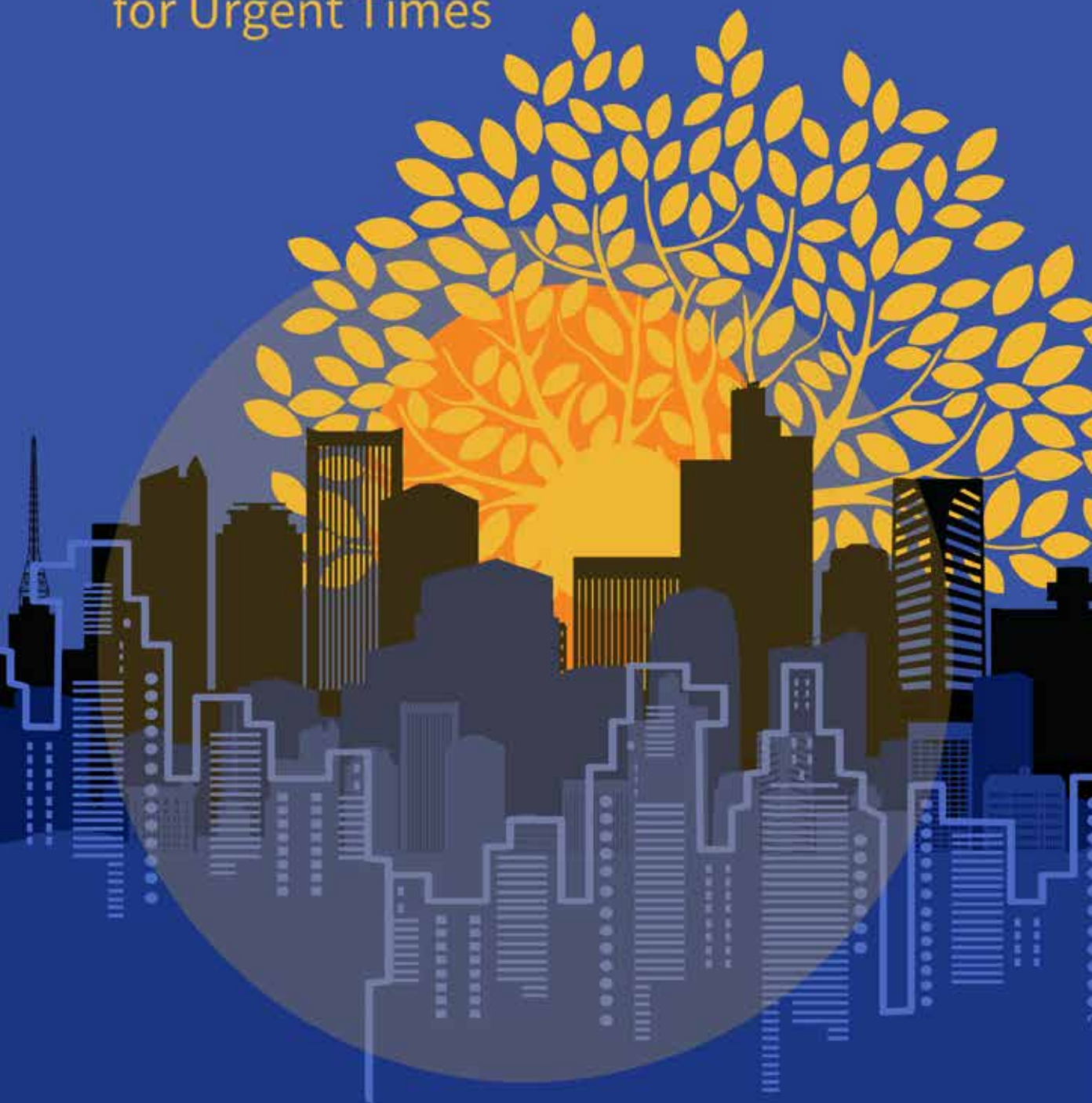


You Plus One

Voter Education Handbook
for Urgent Times





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**WE DEDICATE
THIS VOTER EDUCATION HANDBOOK**

To our elders who for many years
selflessly ensured our parents' generation
and our generation had contact with lessons
on how to influence the levers of power
to promote the interests of the people.

We thank them for their courage and vision
as we pursue being productive fruit that
have sprouted close to the trunk of the tree.

You Plus One

Voter Education Handbook for Urgent Times

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*To love one another in a beautiful land
so beautiful, not only in itself
but because of the people in it,
above all because of the people in it.*

Ernesto Cardenal

*The signals we give —
yes or no, maybe —
should be clear:
the darkness around us
is deep.*

William Stafford

Introduction

Life in the United States continues to worsen. Our economic, political and social reality strains with economic difficulties for the majority. Our politics are suspect and have left out over half the population. Our social life has slid from participating to spectating. Some would argue against beginning a handbook for voter education with statements that seem negative. Well, these statements are objective. There is no reason nor way to grapple with voter education than to begin with the facts: in almost every state the largest group of voters is the NON-VOTING group.

Those with financial resources spend hundreds of millions of dollars on campaigns to vote. These campaigns normally target specific demographics. There are voting campaigns for seniors, women, young adults, African Americans, Latinos, Asian and Tribal people, and many others. We don't oppose these campaigns. Far from it, we know that all efforts to educate and mobilize citizens are a good thing. We stress individual efforts over these campaigns because if you, as a voter, personally reach out to one other person, U.S. voter turnout would be 95 to 100 percent. Personal involvement brings people together. Those who already vote must take personal responsibility to get another person to respond to YOU. We can no longer feel as if we won the game simply because we have voted. Raising the number of us who vote takes individual, personal action.

YOU PLUS ONE works. When ballots come out, select someone you know who does not vote. Meet with them. Go to their home or invite them to yours. Go to a coffee shop. Ask them to vote. You do not need to get them to vote for candidates or policy issues that you support. Honor the sacredness of each one's vote and get that one person you know to cast a ballot with you. Getting a person to vote is sacred in and of itself.

This voter education handbook is aimed at YOU, a voter. The call to action? Simple, YOU PLUS ONE voting! We have carried out voter participation for over twenty-five years and this method of organizing is uplifting and truly patriotic.

YOU PLUS ONE! is a rocket. Let's ride!



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Roy Wilson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Roy" being more prominent than the last name "Wilson".

*Roy D. Wilson, Ed.D.
Executive Director
Institute for Community Leadership
Martin Luther King Jr. Freedom Center*

*No one will save us for us,
but us.*

Anonymous

*The people I love the best
jump into work head first
without dallying in the
shallows*

Marge Piercy

Take Good Care of One Another

Voting in a democracy is essentially an act of care and concern. It is how we look out for each other. A democracy operates on conduct. It combines rights and responsibilities. Voting is like family rights and responsibilities. In healthy families, parents have rights and responsibilities, and so do children. For example, most American parents know they have the right to parent their children based on their cultural values and ethics. They know they also have the responsibility to care for their children, to provide love and food, shelter and safety.

Let's be very clear: All Americans eligible to vote, actually DO VOTE. In an election, an eligible voter can

vote for three things: they can vote for this, that, or neither. In other words, the eligible voters who do not vote ARE voting; they are voting *against* taking care of one another. It is like choosing not to be the father or mother, the brother or sister, the neighbor or co-worker that they are.

Those who vote for or against an initiative, referendum or candidate are choosing how they want to care for others and be cared for by others. They are choosing a specific plan, idea or person. The ones choosing NOT to vote in an election are choosing to reject that responsibility. They are turning their back on caring for others. They are choosing to be irresponsible for children and other Americans. This

group of voters who choose to drop out of mutually-caring for one another become problematic in American society because they are using education, health, transportation, communication, and housing that others are making decisions about.

A reminder: We are talking about Americans who are eligible to vote and choose not to. We are not talking about those whose vote is suppressed or made unreasonably difficult. Voting for or against should be as easy as coming home after work or school. Voting should be as simple as greeting each other.



Fire departments that are in jurisdictions with a healthy voter turnout generally provide wider-ranging and more effective support for their communities.

*My veins don't end in me
but in the unanimous blood
of those who struggle for life.*

Roque Dalton



Ports are places of connection between land and maritime space, where ships load and discharge cargo and passengers. When we elect the port commissioners that serve as the governing body over the port, and when we vote on funding and policies that govern the port, that means there is public control over the port. Public control benefits our local, regional, and national economy and environment.

You Plus One!

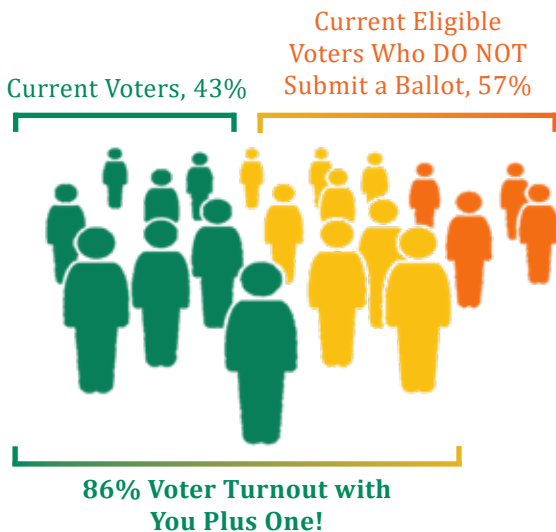
How to Read these Graphics

GREEN = YOU, a current voter who submits a ballot

YELLOW = PLUS ONE, a new voter who YOU bring to vote

GREEN PLUS YELLOW = YOU PLUS ONE, current voters (YOU) plus the new voter you bring to the polls with you (PLUS ONE)

ORANGE = Remaining eligible voters who DO NOT submit a ballot, and aren't brought along to the polls



In California, 43% of eligible voters actually turned in a ballot in the 2022 Midterm election. That means the remaining 57% of eligible voters chose NOT to submit a ballot. They voted against voting and against taking care of one another.

If YOU, a California voter who turns in a ballot, bring one new voter with you to the polls next election, we can quickly double the number of people turning in ballots! We can reach 86% voter turnout!

In Washington State, 56% of eligible voters actually turned in a ballot in the 2022 Midterm election. That means the remaining 44% of eligible voters chose NOT to submit a ballot. They voted against voting and against taking care of one another.

If YOU, a Washington voter who turns in a ballot, bring one new voter with you to the polls next election, we can quickly double the number of people turning in ballots! We can reach 100% voter turnout!



100% Voter Turnout with You Plus One!

You Plus One!

Voter turnout here indicates the number of people who submitted a ballot out of all *eligible voters*. Eligible voters include citizens over age 18, both registered and unregistered.

When you learn, teach.

When you get, give.

Maya Angelou

In Illinois, 46% of eligible voters actually turned in a ballot in the 2022 Midterm election. That means the remaining 54% of eligible voters chose NOT to submit a ballot. They voted against voting and against taking care of one another.

If YOU, an Illinois voter who turns in a ballot, bring one new voter with you to the polls next election, we can quickly double the number of people turning in ballots! We can reach 92% voter turnout!



**92% Voter Turnout with
You Plus One!**



**76% Voter Turnout with
You Plus One!**

In Alabama, 38% of eligible voters actually turned in a ballot in the 2022 Midterm election. That means the remaining 62% of eligible voters chose NOT to submit a ballot. They voted against voting and against taking care of one another.

If YOU, an Alabama voter who turns in a ballot, bring one new voter with you to the polls next election, we can quickly double the number of people turning in ballots! We can reach 76% voter turnout!

You Plus One!



**96% Voter Turnout with
You Plus One!**

In Kansas, 48% of eligible voters actually turned in a ballot in the 2022 Midterm election. That means the remaining 52% of eligible voters chose NOT to submit a ballot. They voted against voting and against taking care of one another.

If YOU, a Kansas voter who turns in a ballot, bring one new voter with you to the polls next election, we can quickly double the number of people turning in ballots! We can reach 96% voter turnout!

In Florida, 49% of eligible voters actually turned in a ballot in the 2022 Midterm election. That means the remaining 51% of eligible voters chose NOT to submit a ballot. They voted against voting and against taking care of one another.

If YOU, a Florida voter who turns in a ballot, bring one new voter with you to the polls next election, we can quickly double the number of people turning in ballots! We can reach 98% voter turnout!



**98% Voter Turnout with
You Plus One!**

You Plus One! Voter Turnout Data Sources

Ballotpedia, "Voter turnout in United States elections," https://ballotpedia.org/Voter_turnout_in_United_States_elections

Stacker, "Voter Demographics of Every State," <https://stacker.com/politics/voter-demographics-every-state>



School buses are the most regulated vehicles on the road because of the responsibility we feel nationally for the safety of our students on the road and the accessibility of education.

Each one, teach one!

African Proverb

*Something has been let loose
in the rain;
it is teaching us to love.*

Joy Harjo



These are the Smith River Hotshots from Smith River, California. Forest firefighters are funded in part by the federal government, state government, county government and Tribal Nations. When wildfires rage, hotshot firefighters light smaller fires to create buffer zones that stop a wildfire's spread. Often, these firefighters get flown in from outside the wildfire's local jurisdiction. It is a dangerous job. Their ethics of courage and sacrifice create a model for us of democratic living.

Benefits of Voting

How do we get more of us to vote?

Americans who vote against voting (those who don't turn in a ballot) usually want to talk about reasons why NOT to vote. They talk about how their choice does not matter. They mention political corruption. They claim it is too hard and difficult to know how to vote or what to vote for. These same Americans share many of the same wants and desires of those of us who vote.

**Here are some key points in talking with others
about WHY WE SHOULD VOTE**

When All of Us Vote, We Can...

- Ensure our communities access to nutritious food
- Shelter our communities and keep everyone safe
- Keep our communities healthy and take care of those who are sick
- Protect workers' rights and make sure we can live on our income

*Like you I love love, life,
the sweet smell of things.*

Roque Dalton



In 1975, Congress established the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC). It serves people in all 50 states, 33 Tribes, Washington D.C., and 5 territories – about 40% of all infants in the United States. This particular mobile WIC unit is set up to provide pregnant women living in rural areas access to vital healthcare. This is one way the representation we choose matters. It helps us take care of our communities' most vulnerable people.

*From this sudden silence...
You raise me now in song.*

Bella Akhmadulina

*The hand seeks
other hands to help,
A community of hands to help.*

Langston Hughes

Civil Society or Uncivil Society

A civic responsibility is one that is expected of every member of society. Commonly accepted examples include:

- Driving on your side of the yellow line
- Stopping at red lights
- Not littering
- Keeping schools safe for our children

Many Americans engage in very basic forms of civic engagement all the time. We care for a neighbor that needs help in their house or apartment, in their yard or car. If they need a ride, we give one. We are often happy to be of use.

Americans also involve themselves in organized forms of volunteering. They participate in food banks, neighborhood clean ups, collecting litter along roads and highways, aiding staff and patients in health clinics and care centers, and mentoring young people at the school or neighborhood center.

While many Americans practice civic responsibility and engage, we are all confronted with the fact that civic disengagement has become acceptable. We are urged to do less for others and less for the common good and to instead focus more on doing our own thing, on being comfortable.

We lack understanding of the role of civic society and civic engagement in developing a system that better meets our basic economic, social and political needs. This problem is perpetuated by government decisions, programs and laws. It is perpetuated by public education,

by the criminal justice system, and by the media-entertainment industry. Civic disengagement is also supported by the hyper-individualism enforced upon society, and by large numbers of us conducting ourselves in hyper-individualistic lifestyles.



The Constitution of the United States gives Congress the power to establish Post Offices. The ability to connect with one another through the mail is a basic and fundamental service supported by the people — our taxes, our vote, and our voice. We are the government.

YOU Can Increase Voter Turnout!

All Americans live in their respective geographic location. Each location is situated within many different jurisdictions. A jurisdiction is where a particular government has legal and regulatory responsibilities created by those who vote in favor of this or that. Each jurisdiction maintains the laws, regulations and services that take place in that jurisdiction. Those who do not cast a ballot are voting against taking the responsibility of helping decide between this or that way of making some acts legal and other acts illegal, and in regulating or deregulating the power of the government(s) within which they live.

Let's look at some of the jurisdictions where decisions get made,

- Federal government
- State government
- Tribal government
- County government
- City government
- School district
- Water/sewer district

Some jurisdictions also have districts such as,

- Irrigation District
- Hospital District
- Cemetery District

All jurisdictions and laws are based on the Constitution of the United States; then the state constitution; then the county charter; and then the city charter. Cities, school districts and other service districts are granted their powers through the state constitution, and all jurisdictions must conform to the laws and rules of the United States Constitution.

Increasing voter turnout is the only way to make sure laws, regulations and services support and help us, the people.

*Every city, your city.
When you speak,
you speak for your country.*

Luis J. Rodriguez



In the 1930s, New Deal agencies like the Public Works Administration funded projects to build and improve public infrastructure around the United States to meet the people's demand for public investment and unemployment relief during the Great Depression. Bridges like the Bay Bridge are a critical part of our transportation system and a great example of people's involvement in creating public works.

**The best way you can
take responsibility
to increase voter turnout is...**

Recruit someone you personally know
who does not vote.

Take them to the polls to vote with you.

Bring them to your dining room table,
to a coffee shop,
or join them in their living room.

You Plus One!



The American Public Health Association defines public health as the promotion and protection of the health of people and the communities where they live, learn, work and play. Publicly funded hospitals play a key role in that and depend on the participation of voters to keep them running.

*In the small parts of the world.
Everyone is the quarterback.*

Sherman Alexie

*When a man starts out to build a world,
He starts first with himself
And the faith that is in his heart —
The strength there,
The will there to build.*

Langston Hughes

Epilogue

We've all heard the African axiom, "Each one, teach one!" Some leaders have said something similar, "No one will save us for us, but us." The great poet, Maya Angelou directs us: "When you learn, teach. When you get, give."

YOU PLUS ONE requires each of us who vote to take up the challenge of ensuring that someone who currently does not vote becomes a voter. Whomever you select will thank you. Together we can construct within our nation a majority of citizens who vote.

In your hands dwells the new horizon for voting in America!

Together we are better!

Let's suit up and go to work. YOU organizing another person is the best way to protect and promote democracy!

Voting Resources

To register to vote or get personalized voter information by state and local jurisdiction, go to:

Nationwide - VOTE 411
www.vote411.org
(866) OUR-VOTE



Alabama Secretary of State
sos.alabama.gov/alabama-votes
(800) 274-VOTE



California Secretary of State
registertovote.ca.gov
(800) 345-VOTE



Florida Division of Elections
dos.fl.gov/elections/for-voters
(850) 245-6200



Illinois State Board of Elections
www.elections.il.gov
Springfield Office: (217) 782-4141
Chicago Office: (312) 814-6440



Kansas Secretary of State
sos.ks.gov/elections/voter-registration.html
(800) 262-VOTE



Washington State Secretary of State
sos.wa.gov/elections
(800) 448-4881



Poetry References

In order of appearance

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